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WHIRRAKEE

January/February 2009 Vol. 30 No. 1

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO

FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
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Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $34; Family $40; Concession: Single $28.50; Family $34. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $34.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square. The invited speaker at general meetings starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper.
If a workshop is held prior to the meeting, it will be advertised and it usually starts at 7.00pm.
The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Bob Ruddick, Ben Goonan, Jaydon Hoskin, Liz Graham, Diana Collier. *More committee members are urgently sought, see page 4.*

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, unless otherwise specified. In addition to local excursions, campouts are held several times each year, usually coinciding with long weekends or holiday periods.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club has one active group that meets regularly (the Fauna Study Group) and other groups that meet at irregular intervals.

Fauna Study Group: meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:30pm in the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building.
Chairman: John Burtonclay, Fadersons Lane, Mandurang (5439 5710)
Secretary: Bill Holsworth, 13 Nabilla Crs., Bendigo (5443 4063)
Equipment Officer: Maurie Lewis (0407 427179)

Bird Observers Group: This group has field excursions and the occasional lecture evening. Please consult the *Whirrakee* for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5449 3479.
To propose meetings or excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

Front cover photo?...see page 2.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club

Vol. 30, No. 1, January/February 2009

Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*) which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

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Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although articles received more than one week after the monthly General Meeting will probably be too late for inclusion in the next issue of *Whirrakee*.

Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
Happy New Year to everybody. This edition has a slightly different lay-out than usual, because most contributions were of a pictorial nature, and they were so good, they needed more than the usual column size. Nevertheless, I do hope that some (written) summer material will come in for the March Whirrakee. There must a lots of 'extreme heat' stories out there after the past few days. Page 10 has the first half of this year's speaker syllabus. Thanks very much to Ben Goonan for organising this.

Front Page Illustration – Photographer: Rod Lindrea

This dramatic scene happened at Axe Creek on the fifth of December 2008, just after midday. The resident Goanna got the young Rosella and ate it all up!
According to Daren Green's 'Lizard's of Bendigo' series (Part 4, June *Whirrakee*), this is a Lace Goanna, *Varanus varius*, and a well-fed one at that!

Short notices

Do you have a **red sticker on your *Whirrakee*** ? - your membership is due.

According to the club's constitution, memberships are due by Sep 01 each year, payable in advance for the coming financial year. This year a large number of our members have not yet paid their subscriptions for 2008/2009.

If you have received a red sticker and you have already paid, please contact Anne Bridley on 5449 3479.

SEANA campout Southcombe Lodge, Port Fairy
20-23rd March 2009
Host: Warrnambool FNC
contact: Liz Kenna 5568 4206 or Viv Bounds 5567 6257

Special Fauna Group Meeting 25th February

All Field Naturalists (incl. former members) welcome
to 'Clachan' (pile of rocks), the residence of Glenise and Rob Moors
555 Mandurang South Road.
from 6pm onwards. **Ph. 54396254** for directions.

Bring food, drink and chairs. A BBQ will be available. Tea and coffee will be provided.
See back page for this and other fauna group activities

Don't forget...
Annual Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 1 March 2009

February General Meeting – Preview
Presenter: Nick Roberts - Victorian National Parks Association

Title: Red Gum Icons Project

Over the past year the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council (VEAC) has undertaken an investigation into Red Gum forests and made recommendations regarding their management. To date this process has been fiercely contested and recently the government has announced that the recommendations of the assessment council generally be accepted. This presentation will outline the investigation process, provide background to the values of the forests, discuss the associated management issues and outline what will happen in the future for these important forests.

Rainbow in the West

by Tom Burton

A phenomenon I have never seen before: a few mornings back, when I was out on my daily walk (about 7am), I saw a big, bright rainbow in the west. There must have been some rain falling part way to the ground. I have never before seen a rainbow on a bone-dry day. Come to think of it, I cannot recall seeing a rainbow in the west before -- can only happen in the morning, of course.

More Committee members needed

by Anne Bridley, BFNC secretary

For BFNC committee meetings, we need to have a quorum. If meetings in any one month are non-quorate, they cannot proceed. To avoid such situations, we need another couple of members so that any essential club business can be done. So we now have an opportunity for younger or newer members to have their say in this vital aspect of running our club.
Contact Anne Bridley (5449 3479) or Glenise Moors (54396254) for more information.

Art in Nature Photographer/Author: Beverley Brooks

Attached are two photos of a bee's/wasp's? nest I came across in Dead Dog Gully, Spring Gully. I thought it was very beautiful and would be interested to know what sort of nest it is. I have not seen anything around the nest, which is approx 8cm high x 5cm wide with empty cells either side. It feels slightly waxy rather than papery. It is still there after the first sighting about 6 weeks ago (this was sent in December) but looking a bit weathered. Hope this information is useful and somebody can identify the builder(s).

'Mandurang' Photographer: Karen Thomas

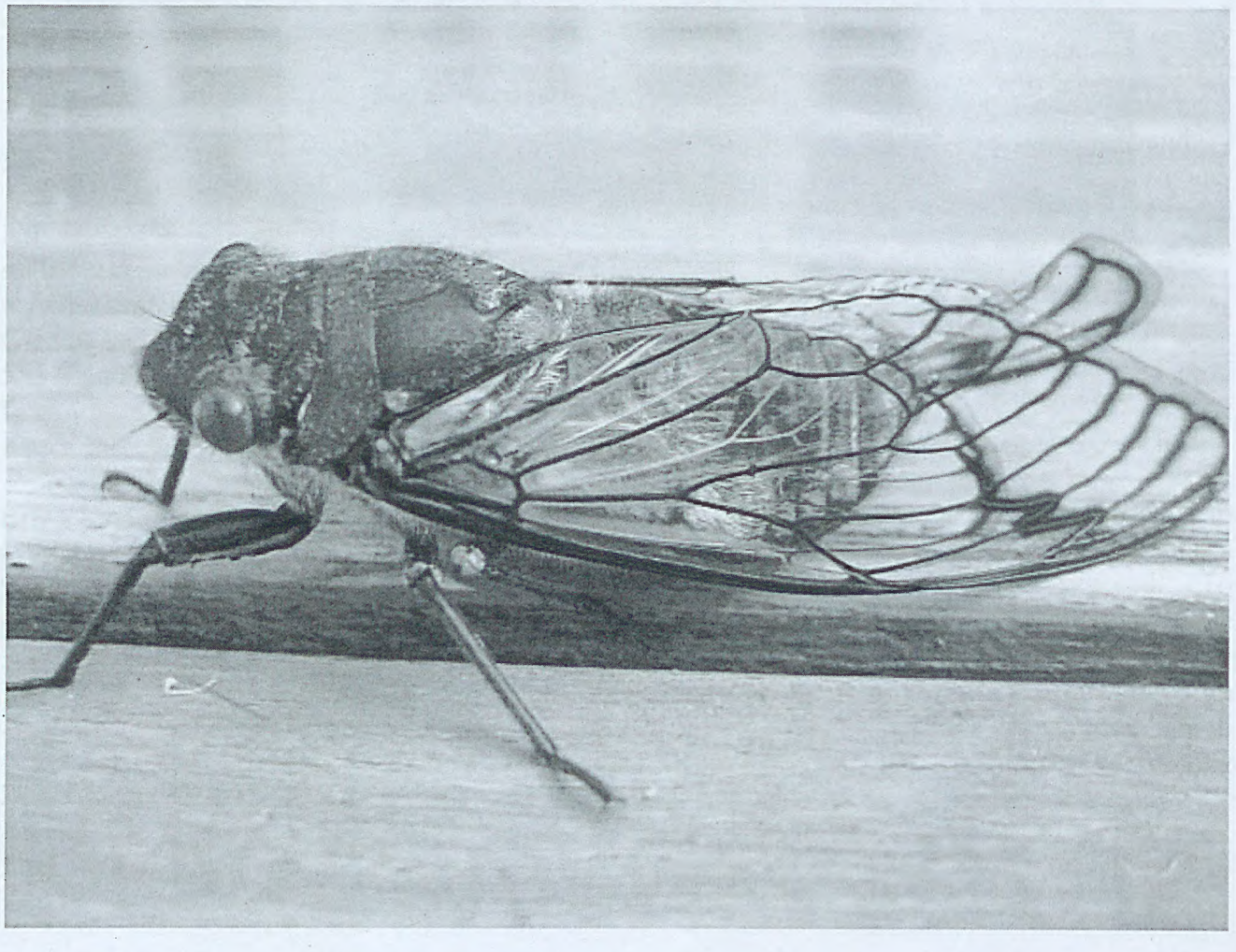
The name for this locality seems to have been taken from the aboriginal name for this black cicada. It is not restricted to Mandurang, however, but is a widespread species, found from Southern Queensland to Tasmania. Tom Burton found a photo of it (and its scientific name) in Wikipedia by googling the words 'Australia Cicada'!! (mind you, the photo was not nearly as good as the one below)
The name of the beast (commonly referred to as Red-Eye) is *Psaltoda moerens*

An article at http://www.faunanet.gov.au/wos/factfile.cfm?Fact_ID=150 states the following:
It is not advisable to stand under trees with high populations of Red Eyes. As the cicadas feed on the tree sap, they expel small droplets of clear waste fluid, which can fall to the ground in a constant spray when numbers are high.

However, this 'expelling of liquid' may be more interesting in some species. In the Sonoran Desert, some species of cicadas were found to help regulate their body temperature by achieving the equivalent of sweating[1]. Liquid expelled through special pores on their dorsal surface, cools the animals and thus helps them remain active during the hottest part of the day. It may be advantageous to them to remain active during the fierce heat, as there are fewer of their predators (birds and wasps) around then.

1. Molles, M.C. (2002). Ecology. McGraw Hill.

Karen wrote…
notice one wing not fully out yet ... but flew off within minutes of taking this photo ...fantastic ...took off like a trooper...!!!



Community Day
at
Mount Cole

Sunday 1st March 2009
From 11am

Join with Conservation Groups and the Local Community to discuss the ecological values of Mount Cole and the Pyrenees forests, their future conservation and potential for tourism

Bendigo District Environmental Council and Ballarat Environmental Network invites you to enjoy bird watching, a bush walk, music and listen to guest speakers including:

Members of Parliament
Australian Conservation Foundation
Victorian National Parks Association
Local Tourism Operators

The event will be held at Richards Campground on The Glut Road off the Elmhurst-Beaufort Rd. Follow the signs for Beeripmo Bushwalk from Raglan or Elmhurst.

In case of declaration of extreme fire danger
or for further information please contact:

Ian Magee – 03 5447 8375 or Gayle Osborne – gayle.osborne@bigpond.com

CONFERENCE

Maintaining Biodiversity in the Face of Environmental Change

We take great pleasure in inviting you to a significant event: the third one-day Biodiversity Across the Borders conference to be conducted by University of Ballarat, La Trobe University, Deakin University, Victorian University, and Charles Sturt University. The theme for 2009 is "**Maintaining biodiversity in the face of environmental change**" and will be held at the Mt. Helen campus of the University of Ballarat - 19th June 2009. The aim of the conference is to "show case" the ecological work of the above mentioned five universities in regional Victoria and adjacent New South Wales, both to other ecologists and to management agencies.

At the moment, please note the date in your diary.
Date: 19th June 2009
Venue: University of Ballarat, Mt Helen Campus

There will be small registration fee for attending this conference. Morning tea, afternoon tea and lunch will be provided. If you are interested in attending or presenting please provide me with your contact details (email preferred). A full itinerary will be forwarded to you at the earliest opportunity.

For further information please contact
Dr. S. K. Florentine (Florry)
Centre for Environmental Management
University of Ballarat.
PO Box 663
Ballarat, VIC 3353
Australia
s.florentine@ballarat.edu.au

Australian Plants in the 21st Century

GEELONG □26th September to 2nd October 2009

Talks by knowledgeable and entertaining speakers
Excursions to the Otway Ranges and Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne

Guided tours to Victoria's diverse bioregions - Melbourne gardens and South Gippsland
- The Grampians and The Little Desert
- The Otways, Shipwreck Coast and Coleraine
- The Goldfields to the Murray River

EVERYONE WELCOME

□If you have a passion for native plants, join us in Geelong - We'd love to show you around

ASGAP2009 - Proudly hosted by APS (Australian Plants Society) Victoria

For more information go to http://asgap2009.apsvic.org.au/
or http://asgap2009.apsvic.org.au/index.html

Pre and Post Conference tours

These guided tours will show you the diversity of ***Victoria's bioregions*** from the spectacular granite mountains, dense heathy lowlands, and sweeping white sandy beaches of Wilson's Promontory, to the cool temperate rainforests of the Otway Ranges and the Mallee heath of The Little Desert

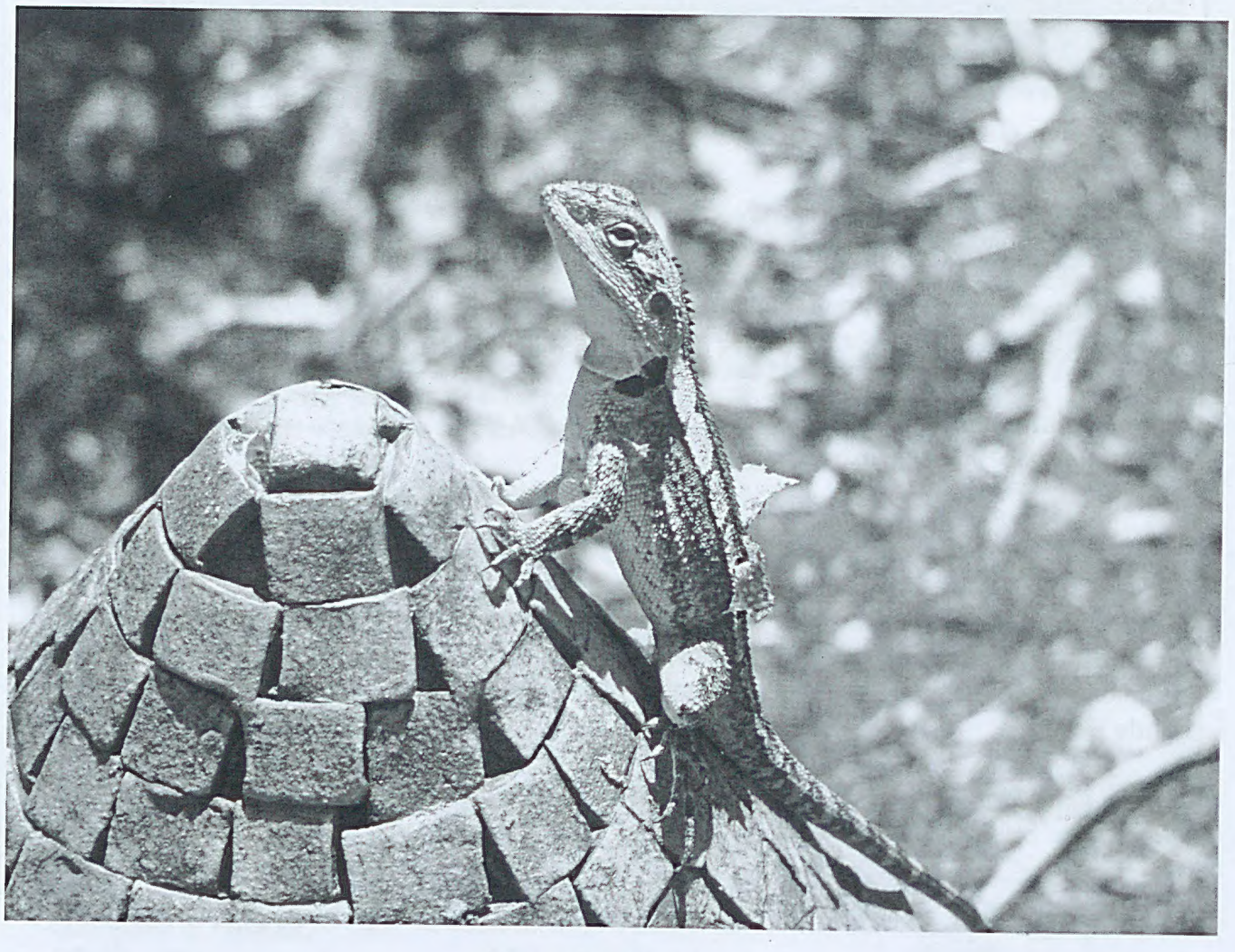
These tours look so good, I encourage you to look at the above website and click on 'tour itineraries' on the left panel.

More rescuers and telephone operators are needed for the Wildlife Rescue & Information Network

After 11 years of operation, WRIN has found that its workload has increased to the point that more rescuers and telephone operators are needed.
Training will be provided by experienced WRIN members, and any time that can be given will be most appreciated.
If you feel that you can help, the Rescue phone no is 0419 356433
or email secretary@wrin.asn.au

Another Lizard from Axe Creek... Photographer: Rod Lindrea

This skin-shedding lizard was photographed in January. Again, using Darren Green's 'Lizards of Bendigo' series (Part 3, May *Whirrakee*), this one is a Jacky Lizard, *Amphibolurus muricatus*, (but known by the residents as 'Larry').



King of the Castle...

Speaker Syllabus for February – July 2009

DATE	PRESENTER	TITLE
11/2/09	NICK ROBERTS	Red Gum Icons Project
11/3/09	RICHARD HUGHES	The emergence of large scale nature conservation projects - a West Victorian perspective
8/4/09	ALAN YEN	Bugs around Bendigo, and should we eat bugs?
13/5/09	LYNDA CHAMBERS	Flora, fauna, climate change and community science: How you can help
10/6/09	RICHARD GOONAN	What happened to our Creekline Grassy Wodlands?
8/7/09	NICK CLEMANN	Snake management in Victoria

Diary

The General, Bird Observers Group and Fauna Study Group meetings are held at the Golden Square Senior Citizens Building, Old High Street, Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

General Meetings

Wednesday, February 11 **7.30pm**
Speaker – Nick Roberts: 'The Red Gum Icons Project'. Many members have taken a close interest in the investigations and recommendations of VEAC as to the future management of these forests. See page 3 for a summary.

Excursions
Contact Richard Goonan if you have any comments, questions or suggestions for excursions (ph 0423418815).

Fauna Group
This group normally meets (in the clubrooms) on the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. However, the next couple of meetings are held out of doors. New and seasoned Club members most welcome to attend.

Wed. 25th Feb. - At Rob and Glenises home, South Mandurang Rd. **Ph. 54396254** for directions. 6pm onwards, BBQ (provided) tea plus nature observations. BYO meat/vege burger, utensils and something to share (a good story is as good as something edible). Binoculars are recommended.
All past and present members welcome.

Wed. 25th March - Meet at Crusoe Res. No 7 picnic ground for nature walk, talk, watch and listen. 7-9pm. Binoculars recommended plus clothing suitable to weather and sturdy footwear. Chair and thermos may also be handy. Contact Kerrie **Ph. 54478017**

Regular Fauna Excursions
Every Friday morning starting at around 9 to 9:30, the Fauna Group inspects nest boxes in the Spring Gully area. The excursions are led by Maurie Lewis, 16 Vains St. Golden Square. Phone 0407 427 179 or 5442 1813. Phone Maurie to confirm exact departure times and location. If you don't phone but go directly to Maurie's house and find nobody at the house between 9 and 9:30 then the excursion is not on.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.
W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.

SEANA campout
Southcombe Lodge, Port Fairy
20-23rd March 2009
Host: Warrnambool FNC
contact: Liz Kenna 5568 4206 or Viv Bounds 5567 6257

Fenner Conference on the Environment, through the Australian Academy of Science 10-12 March 2009, The Shine Dome, Canberra, Australia.
Australia invests billions of dollars in restoring landscapes, protecting biodiversity and managing invasive weeds and pests. Do we get good environmental returns on this investment? Are the decisions we make transparent, accountable and defensible? Could we do better? How do we make decisions in the face of growing uncertainty? These big questions addressing big issues lie at the heart of the 2009 Fenner Conference on the Environment. Running over two days at the Shine Dome in Canberra in March 2009, this conference will bring together a galaxy of decision-making stars from the research, management and policy arenas. If you have any interest or responsibility for environmental decision making in your organisation then this is one conference you can't afford to miss.
Numbers are limited ; register at:
http://www.conferenceplus.com.au/fennerconf/2009/